

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 500

By Johnson

A RESOLUTION to honor Hargus "Pig" Robbins, renowned musician and member of the Country Music Hall of Fame, on his extraordinary career.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor and commend those exceptional artists who, through their extraordinary musical talents, have earned the respect and admiration of their peers and fans alike; and

WHEREAS, one such accomplished musician is Hargus Melvin "Pig" Robbins, a pianist and arranger whose influence on music spans the generations; and

WHEREAS, Hargus Melvin Robbins was born in Spring City on January 18, 1938, the son of Raymond and Olis Robbins; and

WHEREAS, having lost his sight at the age of three, Mr. Robbins attended the Tennessee School for the Blind, where he began studying classical piano at the age of seven; and

WHEREAS, Pig Robbins soon began to develop his own style, influenced by such pop and jazz pianists as Floyd Cramer, Owen Bradley, and Ray Charles; he learned to play country music by ear, being especially fond of the music of Tex Ritter; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robbins acquired his nickname, "Pig," after he kept sneaking through a fire escape into the music room to play the piano at unauthorized times; after one of his school supervisors observed that he was "as dirty as a pig," the name stuck; and

WHEREAS, soon after graduating, Pig Robbins began playing the Nashville club scene, but it was in the recording studio that he found his greatest success, beginning with his lively piano playing on George Jones's #1 hit song "White Lightning" in 1959; and

WHEREAS, as Mr. Robbins's session calls increased, he became a member of an elite group of studio musicians known as the A-Team, whose members long dominated Nashville's recording industry; and

WHEREAS, over the next several decades, Pig Robbins often worked on hundreds of sessions each year, lending his distinctive touch and impeccable musical taste to a veritable "who's who" of country music, recording with Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Connie Smith, Tanya Tucker, Crystal Gayle, Ernest Tubb, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Bobby Bare, the Statler Brothers, Gary Stewart, and Kenny Rogers; and

WHEREAS, in addition, his appearance on Bob Dylan's 1966 classic *Blonde on Blonde*, created demand for his work among such folk artists as Joan Baez and Peter, Paul & Mary, as well as such pop/rock artists as John Denver, Doug Sahm, the Everly Brothers, Ray Charles, and Tom Jones; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Robbins recorded his first solo album, *A Bit of Country Piano*, in 1963, and issued three more solo records on the Chart label in the late 1960s; and

WHEREAS, Pig Robbins returned to solo recording a decade later, recording for the Elektra label, and he released a trio of albums between 1977 and 1979: *Country Instrumentalist of the Year*, *A Pig in a Poke*, and *Unbreakable Hearts*; and

WHEREAS, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, he burnished his reputation as Nashville's top keyboardist with a new generation of country stars, playing with Marty Stuart, Randy Travis, Alan Jackson, Travis Tritt, Mark Chestnutt, Vince Gill, and Reba McEntire. He also backed alt-rock pranksters, Ween, on their 1996 album, *12 Golden Country Greats*; and

WHEREAS, no stranger to accolades, Pig Robbins received country music's highest honor in 2012, with his induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, his many professional and personal accomplishments aside, Mr. Robbins is most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife Vicki, and they are the proud parents of one son, David; and

WHEREAS, Pig Robbins's influence on American music is truly incomparable, with his music serving as an inspiration to generations of artists, musicians, and fans alike; and

WHEREAS, it is most fitting that the members of this General Assembly should acknowledge and applaud Mr. Robbins for his many contributions to American music; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Hargus Melvin "Pig" Robbins on his long and illustrious career as a recording artist, salute his extraordinary musicianship as a pianist, and recognize his singular contributions to American music.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.